



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

May 20, 2010

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) – a coalition of national not-for-profit organizations representing 60 million older Americans – urges you to vote in support of the "American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act of 2010". This legislation will continue several programs providing crucial assistance to seniors as the nation recovers from severe recession.

Among a number of provisions that will benefit older adults, there are several that highlight the importance of this legislation in helping seniors weather a difficult economy:

- Preventing a substantial cut in Medicare physician fees. Unless Congress acts by June 1st, physicians who treat Medicare patients will experience a 21 percent reduction in Medicare practitioner payments. Preventing this cut and providing stable funding through 2013 will help maintain Medicare beneficiaries' access to providers – a growing concern as Medicare payments lag behind those paid by private health care payers.
- Extending the enhanced Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP). An additional six months of federal matching funds will allow state Medicaid programs to maintain benefits for low-income seniors and provide further economic stimulus. Most states begin a new budget year this July and will depend on a continuation of this assistance to meet their commitments.
- Continuing unemployment insurance and COBRA benefits. As the unemployment rate edges upward, older workers will particularly benefit from a continuation of unemployment insurance and assistance for COBRA benefits. Unfortunately, research shows that unemployed workers 55 years and over usually experience long-term unemployment (an average of 34.7 weeks as of December 2009).

We greatly appreciate your concern for the nation's economic recovery and urge you to vote for this vitally important bill.

Sincerely,

John Rother
Chair, Leadership Council of Aging Organizations